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RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 0697
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 1726
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RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY 1208
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY 1124
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 ASTANA 001000

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AF, PK, KZ

SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN: FOREIGN MINISTER ON NONPROLIFERATION
ISSUES, AFGHANISTAN, OSCE, WTO; U.S.-KAZAKHSTAN COMMISSION

REF: A. SECSTATE 54767

[1](#)B. ASTANA 0957

[1](#)C. ASTANA 0983

[1](#)D. SECSTATE 56723

[1](#)E. ASTANA 0956

[1](#)F. SECSTATE 59226

Classified By: Ambassador Richard E. Hoagland: 1.4 (B), (D)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: On June 10, Foreign Minister Marat Tazhin:

-- praised President Obama's Cairo speech for its
intelligence and candor;

-- expressed gratitude for the briefing on the possibility of
a U.S.-Russia agreement to transit lethal supplies for
Afghanistan;

-- undertook to facilitate the release of \$5M to meet
Kazakhstan's obligation for the project to decommission the
BN-350 nuclear reactor;

-- asked that the demarche on the possible transfer of
military equipment to Syria be submitted officially via
diplomatic note;

-- revealed that Kazakhstan is considering establishing a
foreign assistance mechanism that could be used for
Afghanistan;

-- gratefully received the background information for the
Corfu OSCE ministerial, and requested a brief bilateral
meeting with Secretary Clinton in Corfu; and

-- suggested Kazakhstan might try to follow a two-track WTO
accession strategy: both bilaterally and as the
Russia-Belarus-Kazakhstan customs union.

Following the meeting with the Foreign Minister, Americas'
Director Askar Tazhiyev urged action on establishing a

U.S.-Kazakhstan Commission. END SUMMARY

¶2. (C) The Ambassador met one-on-one with Foreign Minister Marat Tazhin on June 10. Increasingly, Tazhin does not want note-takers from either side present during such meetings.

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S CAIRO SPEECH

¶3. (SBU) When asked for his reaction to President Obama's Cairo speech, Foreign Minister Tazhin enthused that it was "one of the best speeches ever and deserves to be published in 'Speeches that Changed the World.'" Adding that he thought the candor and intelligence of the speech were unparalleled, Tazhin said he sincerely hopes President Obama will be successful in his new opening to the Muslim world -- "not for the sake of the United States, but for the sake of the whole world."

NDN LETHAL TRANSIT THROUGH RUSSIA

¶4. (C) The Ambassador delivered the points in reftel B (see also reftel C), explaining that Moscow initiated this proposal and seemed eager to announce an agreement as a deliverable for the July 7-8 Obama-Medvedev meeting in Moscow. He emphasized the U.S. side was presenting this information to Kazakhstan in the spirit of transparency and to respond to Kazakhstan's requests that it be kept informed of discussions between Washington and Moscow that might involve its interests. Reaffirming that Kazakhstan wants no surprises, Tazhin expressed gratitude for the information.

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KAZAKHSTAN'S FUNDING FOR BN-350

¶5. (C) The Ambassador passed to Tazhin the same non-paper he had presented to Presidential Foreign Policy Adviser Khairat Sarybay on June 5 (reftel C) asking that the Government of Kazakhstan bring together the Ministry of Economy and Budget Planning and the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources to ensure soonest release of Kazakhstan's committed portion of the funding (\$5M) for the on-going work to decommission the BN-350 nuclear reactor. The Ambassador noted that non-proliferation is one of the pillars of the partnership between our two countries, and neither side wants this issue as an irritant. Tazhin responded that budget issues are painful for Kazakhstan this year, but he undertook to call the two ministers to encourage fast resolution.

POSSIBLE TRANSFER OF LETHAL MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO SYRIA

¶6. (C) The Ambassador passed to Tazhin the reftel D demarche (see also reftel E). Tazhin read it closely, commented he understands its importance, and advised the demarche be delivered via diplomatic note so that he could take official action on it. The Ambassador noted that Washington will expect a response to this demarche.

PARTNERSHIP ON AFGHANISTAN, ASSISTANCE FOR IDPs IN PAKISTAN

¶7. (C) Commenting that Kazakhstan's offer to provide full university education for several hundred Afghan students a year in Kazakhstan had been well received in Washington, the Ambassador asked if Kazakhstan has developed further offers of assistance for Afghanistan. Tazhin replied that he had wanted to offer a program to develop small and medium-sized enterprises to help revitalize Afghanistan's economy, but a Government of Kazakhstan expert-level working group had concluded that this would be "too difficult for political and security reasons at this time." Recalling that Kazakhstan had provided \$3M in humanitarian and reconstruction assistance in 2008, Tazhin added that Kazakhstan did not have a similar line item in its budget this year and usually responds to needs for assistance only on the basis of "force majeure." However, Tazhin said, the government is working on a directive that might be ready by the end of June to

establish a standing program of foreign assistance, which would be used in the first instance for Afghanistan.

¶8. (C) The Ambassador asked if Kazakhstan would be willing to respond to the UNHCR appeal for assistance for IDPs in Pakistan. Tazhin replied, "Probably not, since we do not have a budget provision to respond to such appeals, and especially considering the budget environment this year." He added he fully understood the importance of Pakistan in relation to Afghanistan, but not all in the Government of Kazakhstan saw that link, especially because Kazakhstan-Pakistan relations are "only correct, at best." He added that President Nazarbayev places high priority on Kazakhstan's relations with India, and that some in the government see Pakistan as a destabilizer for both Afghanistan and India.

CORFU OSCE MINISTERIAL -- DESIRE FOR BRIEF BILATERAL WITH THE SECRETARY

¶9. (C) The Ambassador delivered the talking points in reftel ¶F. Tazhin said he wanted to emphasize what he had told National Security Adviser Jones and Secretary of State Clinton in Washington: Kazakhstan firmly supports and will continue to support OSCE's three dimensions. He said no one wants, and Kazakhstan will not approve during its 2010 OSCE Chairmanship, an OSCE "summit" devoted solely to Russia's call for a new security architecture for Europe. Tazhin said

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he wanted to reiterate what he had said in Washington: Astana wants to work very closely with Washington on all OSCE issues, and for that reason he is grateful for the Corfu Ministerial talking points and will study them closely.

¶10. (C) Tazhin added that Kazakhstan's Ambassador in Washington, Erlan Idrisov, has been unsuccessful so far securing a "brief bilateral" for Tazhin with Secretary Clinton at the upcoming Corfu Ministerial. He asked that the Ambassador pass his request directly to the Secretary, noting that his desire for such a meeting should be seen in the spirit of our mutual commitment to work together closely on OSCE issues. He laughed and added, "I know every minister wants to be photographed with Madame Secretary, but I actually want to do some work, not have a photo-op."

PUTIN ON KAZAKHSTAN'S WTO ACCESSION BID?

¶11. (C) The Ambassador called to Tazhin's attention a May 9 ITAR-TASS report from Moscow in which Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin reportedly said, "The heads of government of Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan intend to notify the WTO of their intention to start talks on the accession (to the WTO) of the customs union of the three countries as a single customs zone and the suspension of separate WTO accession talks by individual countries." The Ambassador asked if Putin was speaking authoritatively for Kazakhstan. Initially, Tazhin laughed a bit uncomfortably and said, "Kazakhstan is capable of speaking for itself." He added, "In fact, we need to research the technicalities involved here, because we believe it is possible to follow both tracks -- individual accession and accession as a customs union." (NOTE: The Ambassador met with WTO negotiator Vice Minister of Industry and Trade Zhana Aitzhanova on June 11 and will report separately. END NOTE.)

U.S.-KAZAKHSTAN COMMISSION

¶12. (C) Following the Ambassador's meeting with Foreign Minister Tazhin, Americas' Department Director Askar Tazhiyev commented that following Tazhin's May 4-5 meetings in Washington, the Government of Kazakhstan held extensive interagency discussions on how to structure a possible U.S.-Kazakhstan Commission, and has almost finished elaborating a proposal. He asked about the status of U.S. ideas for such a commission. The Ambassador responded

cautiously he was aware that the White House was still studying the question but is not yet at the stage of making any concrete proposal. Tazhiyev said, "Our bilateral momentum is good -- we need to take advantage of it and not let it drift." He suggested that the possible upcoming visit by Under Secretary Burns would be an excellent opportunity for both sides to present their views so that we can move forward with establishing the commission so that it can get to work. The Ambassador promised to pass this message to Washington. (COMMENT: It's obvious that Kazakhstan is taking very seriously the possibility of a U.S.-Kazakhstan Commission. We need to be able to signal our intentions as soon as possible, especially since it seems Astana will expect this to be one of the main points of discussion during an U/S Burns visit. END COMMENT.)

¶13. (C) COMMENT: Although the meeting was cordial and relaxed, we note that for some time Foreign Minister Tazhin has no longer allowed note-takers, or anyone else, in his meetings with the Ambassador. Also, it seemed unusual that he asked that the arms-transfer demarche be submitted officially by diplomatic note, possibly because the Committee for National Security (KNB, ex-KGB) will need to be involved in providing a response. We know that Tazhin expended considerable political capital while playing a key role to

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resolve the Peace Corps case, which rose to the highest level of the government and pitted the progressives against the pro-Russia old guard in the KNB. We suspect he is displaying a fair degree of personal caution, even while continuing to get work accomplished. END COMMENT.
HOAGLAND